THE PROPHECY OF JOEL:

ITS CONTENTS, UNITY AND AIM; AND THE TIME OF ITS COMPOSITION WITH REFERENCE TO THE EXILE.

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Introductory.

This little book has offered the commentators, from the Fathers down to the present time, some puzzling questions, for which the critics of to-day find no satisfactory solution. This is not on account of the language, which is flowing and easy, while the meaning of the words is only here and there difficult to understand; but because the circumstances of its composition, the chief object of the prophecy, the connection of the different parts and the meaning of some passages have been matters of almost continual dispute. This has all tended to make scholars more doubtful in regard to the age of the book. Bunsen[1]) locates Joel between the years 959 and 949 B. C., while others place him differently in every century, indeed in nearly every half century, down to the completion of the second Temple in the year 445, as Duhm, Oort and Merx. The majority of prominent critics since Credner, however, have held that Joel wrote in the early part of king Joash's reign when the Priest Jehoiada was either regent or the king's chief counsellor. Merx's interpretation[2]) differs greatly from that of most of his predecessors, of whose opinions some are groundless, some little supported, and some also irrefutable. His greatest merit is, that he has brought together in a single volume the most valuable materials from the early critics and interpreters of Joel down to Calvin, so that one

1) Gott in der Geschichte I. 321 ff.

2) Die Prophetie des Joel und ihre Ausleger, 1879.

can easily survey the whole field. For Merx's arguments for his peculiar hypothesis are less capable of undergoing a thorough critical test than those of most of his predecessors. In the beginning he tells us, that Joel has not yet been understood, whereas it seems to me that in respect to the age of the Prophet, he has increased the previous doubts and difficulties. The present treatise was therefore *chiefly* prompted in order to discuss and, if possible, to settle the at present much disputed question, whether Joel wrote before or after the Exile.

First Part.

The Contents, Unity and Aim of Joel.

I.

Since the Book of Joel gives us no sure and undisputed marks of the exact age of its composition, the critic usually seeks such evidences by means of an analysis and general statement of the contents and their relation to other recorded historical events. And this method is now rendered unavoidable since not only has the meaning been questioned, but also the originality and clearness of the Prophet have of late been seriously impeached.

To interpret the book throughout literally would be impossible, since it would entirely destroy its unity. In every chapter, especially in the first and second, are unmistakably figurative expressions which can not be disregarded, nor in the literal sense can they possibly be harmonized with other passages. And further, some of the figures of speech in each of these two chapters seem irreconcilably to conflict with figures in the other. The perplexing question is, whether the Prophet had in mind here an army of

men, or an army of locusts, which left the land desolate. The interpreters have therefore usually sought to explain the second chapter figuratively, according to the literal interpretation of the first, or else inversely the latter figuratively according to the literal interpretation of Ch. 2, 1—11. The one class of interpreters finds a description of an army of locusts in the first chapter, and most of them find in the second a further figurative representation of the same, because 1, 6 f. can be understood neither figuratively nor otherwise of an army of men. The other class says: גּוֹי 1, 6 can in no wise mean locusts, and therefore 1, 4 must be interpreted allegorically as one invading army, or better four, the main description of which in the second chapter is in part figuratively to be explained. There are divergences in various directions from both of these methods of interpretation. Thus one usually seeks to avoid difficulties. Other unmistakably figurative expressions in both of these chapters are by some little noticed, or entirely unnoticed, as 1, 18. 20 and 2, 10. 11, which can be understood literally with reference to an army neither of men nor of locusts. Both ancient and modern interpreters, Jews as well as Christians, have sought to escape these perplexing difficulties by adopting an allegorical interpretation of the first half of our book, or, as far as possible, of the whole. All is figurative, and the description of the locusts is an allegorical prophecy of armies, which shall invade and devastate the land. As to just which armies are meant the allegorists have not uniformily agreed. Hengstenberg understands the four names of locusts to apply to the Assyrians together with the Chaldeans, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans. According to this interpretation Joel must have written before the first Assyrian invasion, concerning which he warns the people. Yet this interpretation is chiefly founded, so far as the age of the book is concerned, upon the as-

sumption, that the Minor Prophets stand in strictly chronological order in the Canon. And indeed this assumption should not be underestimated; for although it would not be a proof against strongly conflicting arguments, yet it can not be denied that the collectors of the Canon attempted to arrange these books according to their respective ages, and that they had excellent, although by no means infallible, information, either oral traditions or historical records, or both, whose importance is now undervalued, just as it has hitherto often been exaggerated. But this fact, that the Minor Prophets are for the most part chronologically arranged in the Canon becomes a powerful argument of refutation, as soon as it is attempted to set one of the earlier of these books after the Exile, as some, on nearly every convenient occasion, arbitrarily, indeed almost violently do.

If one gives more careful attention to the allegorical interpretation of Joel, which in itself would not be impossible, providing other circumstances did not forbid it, it appears to be a refuge for its defenders from that which seemed otherwise inexplicable. Against the allegorical, and against every prophetic, interpretation of Chs. 1—2, 16, a few phrases excepted, the following arguments may be considered valid: 1. The words, הֶהָיְתָה זֹאת וגו׳, "has this (such a thing) been in your days, or in the days of your fathers"? 1, 2, fix the attention of the hearers at once upon something extraordinary, which, if no longer exactly present, is well known and on account of its rarity and importance is worthy of being handed down to children's children. Here is not the slightest indication of a future event. 2. Then follows 1, 4—2, 16: a) a highly rhetorical description of a terrible devastation of the land by locusts, 1, 4—20, and thereupon b) a further description either of a pillaging army, or more probably of the same army of locusts with an

invasion and plundering of the city of Jerusalem constantly so fresh and painfully in the memory that it gives color somewhat to the description.

3. Since this description, extending nearly throughout the first half of the book is, with few exceptions, in past time, it should be interpreted prophetically only as a last resort. The question here is not, as Hengstenberg seems to suppose, whether we can locate this calamity in history — many historical events can not be exactly located, — but whether or not this description in past time, 1—2, 16, can possibly refer to the future. The arguments for such an interpretation are either wanting or very weak. On the contrary the following may be offered: a) The few verbs in the future tense, most of them in 2, 3—9, serve simply to render the description of past events lively and present, and can apply to any time which the context may demand. b) While prophecies may indeed begin with pure preterites, i. e. not praet. vav consec, there usually stands first an exclamatory particle, a present participle or an expression in the future in order to direct the attention to the future before the prophecy itself begins. Compare Ob. 2; Is. 28, 16; Ez. 25, 7, where הִנֵּה, as a particle of asseveration, precedes the praet. proph.[1]) Prophecies frequently begin with הִנֵּה followed by a present participle, as הִנְנִי שֹׁלֵחַ וגו׳, Jo. 2, 19. So this expression and the following futures, as also certain verbs in the following verses, clearly point to the future and show, as we shall further see (pp. 14 f.), that the praeterita vav consec. in 2, 18—21 should be understood

1) Nearly related to this is the use of the particles of asseveration إِنَّ and لَ in Arabic. Comp. Wright's Gram. II. 19. a. und 36. إِنَّ occurs especially in the Koran very similarly to הִנֵּה in the Old Testament before prophetical and other expressions, whose credibility might otherwise be questioned. When لَ follows إِنَّ the correctness of the thing asserted is still better assured against possible doubts.

prophetically. But to begin with preterites and continue with the same through twenty or thirty verses, when the future is constantly in view, occurs exceedingly seldom, if indeed at all. Hengstenberg's assumption that "we are upon prophetic ground" in the first part of the book is no proof to the contrary, until there has been some indication shown in the text, that we have reached such ground. It is in vain to point us to Ch. 4., which probably every one interprets prophetically. This chapter refers especially to the future judgment of the nations; but the preterites, the praeterita vav consec. and those in vs. 13 ff. excepted, undoubtedly describe past events. And if the preterites in these verses are to be understood prophetically, like the somewhat similar ones in 2, 22 ff., particularly in v. 24, it is only because we have in both these cases, without doubt reached prophetic ground. There remain now only the preterites in 2, 10. 11a, which point back to "the day of Jehovah" in vs. 1—2a, and stand in close connection with v. 11b, where that day is mentioned again as "great and terrible". And the striking similarity between 2, 10. 11 and 3, 3. 4; 4, 14—16a proves the near relation of these passages. We shall have occasion further on to see, that "the day of Jehovah" here is in the future.

4. While it would be entirely unusual and even peculiar to begin a prophecy in forms of the past and at the same time to call upon the memory of the hearers or readers to witness to the truth of the narration as in 1, 2. 3, when the future is meant, it would be quite awkward and almost unheard of to begin one without some historical basis or present motive. The prophecy, like the sermon in general, applies especially to the condition of the hearers, indeed, has its origin in their material and moral necessities, and continues with encouragement and promises, or with admonitions, warnings and even theatenings of punishment.

But to interpret the first half of our book as a prophecy, without first indicating some present cause for the fearful devastation threatened, would be to neglect every satisfactory inducement to gain the attention of the hearers and every motive to the desired fasting and repentance, 1, 13. 14; 2, 12 ff. and to render the prophecy ineffective and rather meaningless. But it appears that the people heard and heeded the Prophet, or he had the assurance that they soon would do it, 2, 17.

5. The objections made to the figurative interpretation of גּוֹי, 1, 6, and עָם, 2, 2, and to other expressions in 2, 2—9 as referring to the locusts, seem to me rather captious. How then could חַיִל, 2, 11. 25, be applied to the locusts, as it assuredly is? Must the metaphor even in highly figurative language be so restricted that an army of locusts shall not be called simply an army, a people, a nation? How then would poetry be possible? Hävernick[1]) rightly supposed, that גּוֹי, 1, 6, and עָם רַב וְעָצוּם . . . . . עֲצוּמִים וְאֵין מִסְפָּר, 2, 2, show the identity of גּוֹי and עָם. Comp. Prv. 30, 25 f. with חַיִל, 2, 11. 25. Yet this by no means proves, as Hävernick supposed, that these words refer to men and that therefore the entire description is an allegory; but rather being in a figurative description of a devastation by locusts, they must refer to the latter. And further, if גּוֹי and עָם really referred to an army of soldiers, Joel could scarcely have said: "His teeth are like the teeth of a lion", 1, 6, and much less: "It is like a mighty people arrayed for battle", 2, 5, or: "They run like valiant men, like warriors they climb the wall", etc. An army is like an army, or soldiers are like men of war, would be rather ridiculous expressions even in figurative language.

6. When Hengstenberg[2]) says: "The presupposed re-

1) Einleitung in das alte Testament. II.

2) Christologie des Alten Testaments, 2. Aufl. I. 33. 1 ff.

pentance belongs to the future", he runs counter to every clear meaning of the words. For Joel could not have chosen more suitable expressions than his forcible imperatives, if he had earnestly striven to urge the people immediately to repentance. Again says Hengstenberg:[1]) "Outside of the devastation by the locusts there is not the slightest trace of another judgment". But according to Jo. 2, 20 these devastators of the land, i. e., the hostile armies (Hengstenberg) perish in two different seas and in the desert, a fate which met none of the supposed armies, much less all four of them; while Joel indicates, that these enemies should afterwards be gathered at Jerusalem to be destroyed by Jehovah. Are these not very different events and circumstances?

7. If the four kinds of locusts, 1, 4; 2, 25, are so many invading armies, then not the Greeks but the Romans, as Hengstenberg observed,[2]) must be the last army, which should drive out and exterminate the Jews, as the locusts in our book completely devour the nourishment of man and beast. But when, according to these interpreters, did the return, which Jo. 4, 1 mentions, take place after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans? And again, when did the Persians, one of the four armies, conquer Judah or plunder Jerusalem? But Hilgenfeld[3]) will apply the allegory to the four Persian armies, that marched through the land against the Egyptians between 525 and 455 B. C. Yet aside from other political relations, which make that age an impossible one for Joel, as we shall yet see, Hilgenfeld does not inform us, why the Persians so cruelly treated this harmless little colony of their subjects, and four times in

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1) Christologie I. 345.

2) Christologie I. 370 f.

3) Zeitschrift für wissenschaftl. Theologie, IX. S. 412 ff.

succession, or how the Jerusalem of that day lying, for the most part, in waste and without walls, answers to Joel's description. Comp. Jo. 2, 9.

Hengstenberg's[1]) objection, that locusts never attack a city in the way Joel describes, can have little weight; because reports from various eye-witnesses of different dates confirm a similar pressing in and through the cities and houses, where the locust-armies pass. On the other hand this can not be an army of soldiers; for such a description of men breaking in and rushing through the city, could not have failed to mention pillaging and bloodshed. And here is neither mention of injury to the wall nor of a plundering of the city and Temple, both of which notably took place by the hands of the Chaldeans and the Romans.

8. As opposed to those who insist that "the day of Jehovah", 1. 15; 2, 2. 11, applies in part to the time of the Prophet, that the calamity, which he describes, was the beginning of that day. (Credner, Ewald, Hitzig, Keil). I hold with Hävernick, that that day here refers entirely to the future. Grammatically the expression: כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם יְהוָה could apply to the present; but the fact that substantially the same expression in 3, 4; 4, 14 admittedly refers to the future judgment, proves that Joel must have had the same in view in the former passages. that is, he used this expression prophetically. But this does not necessitate the conclusion, that the entire description of the locusts points to a future calamity, as the allegorists assume. "The day of Jehovah" in the Old Testament particularly when it is said: "It is nigh," i. e., in a threatening manner, is always future. The allegorists find "the day of Jehovah" in a future calamity, or rather divide it into several after the four kinds of locusts. That is, Joel had a vision of a devastation of the land by

1) Christologie, I. 390 f.

locusts, which does not occur in his time or generation, but in the distant future, and the locusts are after all not locusts, but soldiers, which devastate the land, — rather a complex kind of typology, repeating itself. The anti-type is type to another anti-type. How could a vision of a future desolation of the land by an army of locusts, which turns out to be an army or armies of men, possibly be a sign of "the fearful day of Jehovah", which the hearers or readers could understand without *further* explanation? The desolation itself by real locusts, which has every sign of being present in the description, would be an easily conceivable sign of another trying ordeal. Morover, the citations, Is. 13, 6; Ez. 30, 2, usually employed to show that Joel's description is prophetic, want the force of conviction. For the context of the former citation clearly applies to the future, and the very form of the latter shows that it is prophetic. With Joel it is quite different. The whole context is in past time; while we know on the other hand that he refers to the future in 1, 15, because he says, "the day" is near, not present, and he seems to cite the mournful state of things in v. 16 as a sign of its approach; but we also know that that momentous occasion is in the indefinite future, because he afterwards connects it with the judgment upon all nations, 3, 4; 4, 14, where the context is unmistakably future. Thus in the midst of a sermon based upon the deplorable condition of things calling the people to repentance with almost threatening admonitions, he suddenly points to the future: "Alas for the day! for the day of Jehovah is near". Such rhetorical and exclamatory expressions are common in all languages. The day of Jehovah was truly present in the plague of locusts, yet not as the beginning of the last judgment (Ewald, Hitzig, et al.), but this judgment upon Judah in comparison with that one to come upon all nations is only a significant omen of the latter. Thus the proclamation of "the

day of Jehovah" in the former half of the book points to the latter half, where it is more fully described, and also shows the unity of the book.

Because these references in the early part of the book to expressions in the latter half have been so little heeded, critics have often failed to recognize the unity of the prophecy; and some (Ewald,[1]) Delitzsch[2]) et al.) have felt themselves obliged to bridge over the supposed break between the two halves by intervening remarks, 2, 17—18 (or some: 18—19), where the Prophet ceased to speak and waited for the assembly to repent, while the priests prayed v. 17; whereupon Jehovah answered their petition vs. 20 ff. Ewald supposed that it rained in the meantime, which was the sign of returning fruitfulness of the soil, which Joel could then promise. But if the interpretation already given be correct, namely, that the plague of locusts was a present event and its description gives only figurative hints of a previous hostile invasion, and that Joel recognized in these an omen of the judgment, not only of his own, but of all people, with the most of which the above critics agree, then the supposed break in the discourse would not only have been unnatural, but awkward and a positive hindrance to the main object in view.

It was therefore not without cause, that Graetz[3]) protested against this mechanical division of the discourse just where the increasing interest positively forbids it. After the Prophet had clearly indicated, that he meant repentance of the heart and not merely the rending of garments, which seems to have been the custom during the great calamity, he calls upon the people once more to humble themselves

1) Die Propheten des Alten Bundes 2. Ausg. I. 105 f.
2) In Rudelb. u. Guer's Zeitschrift, 1851. S. 306 ff.
3. Der Einheitliche Charakter der Prophetie Joels, 1873.

before Jehovah, and not to be misunderstood, he names the different ages and classes, 2, 12—16.

But it is not so certain as is sometimes supposed, that th epeople proceeded directly after the suggestion in 1, 13 f. to the Temple, — that would be a little hurried in the midst of a spirited discourse. Yet we may possibly have an assembly before us. It is also probable that Joel here presupposes what shall soon take place: "The priests, the servants of Jehovah, shall (not let them, as many translate) weep between the porch and the altar . . . and shall say," etc. We might also suppose that this zealous prophet during, and, perhaps before the plague, had often itinerated the land calling the people to repentance, that this little book is one, or contains the substance of more than one prophecy, and that its composition was prompted by the desire to keep the people in remembrance of the calamity, which they had experienced as an omen of the more terrible judgment to come. Conjecture what we may, there is no positive proof, whether or not exactly this book was ever delivered as a discourse in the court of the Temple or even in Jerusalem, nor that it contains the Prophet's "activity as a whole" (Hävernick). It would seem venturesome even to assume, that a prophet so poetically and rhetorically endowed, should confine his activity to the few years during the plague. The form of address, however, renders it highly probable that this is a discourse held in Jerusalem, and if 2, 17 describes what the author sees, of course he was in an assembly in the court of the Temple. For our purpose this view may be accepted as conclusive. Yet we can at most conclude with certainty that Jo. 2, 17 ff. either witness to an assembly in the court of the Temple, or presuppose one soon to take place, in which the priests earnestly pray for the people. And the penitence of this assembly furnished him sufficient ground to answer his suggested "Who

knoweth"? 2, 14. with the certainty of a praeter. proph., as I understand the futura vav consec. in vs. 18. 19 a: "And Jehovah will (not as an exercise of the will, but simply future) be jealous for His land, He will spare His people and will answer and will say unto His people: Behold I send (not have sent, as some render it) you corn . . . and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen," continuing the promises to the end of the third chapter.[1])

Thus with Merx (p. 8) I understand the verbs in 2, 18. 19 (beginning of the verse) as futures, without supporting him in regarding them, contrary to the punctuation, as jussives. Wünsche,[2]) who with Credner and others explains them as fut. vav consec., admits that they might be rendered as praet. proph.[3] He renders them in the past apparently to combat the allegorists, who will push every thing possible into the future. But this is unnecessary as there are sufficient other refutory arguments against their interpretation. And it is also incorrect; for since the foregoing verbs are plainly futures, or at most presents, and that which immediately follows passes by means of הִנֵּה שֹׁלֵחַ וגו׳, v. 19, into prophecy, these fut. vav consec. should certainly be regarded as praeterita proph. If one regard this as arbitrary, these verbs may be understood as so-called futura exacta. Or if the verbs in v. 17 be considered as a continuation of the foregoing Imperatives, they must nevertheless, from their nature and the context, point to future events, and in no case be referred to the past; which is all that is here insisted upon. Then no one will feel obliged violently to rend this prophecy, which is a logical unity, assunder exactly in the middle.

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1. It will have been observed that the citations are according to the Hebrew text, which gives five verses to Ch. 3.

2) Die Weissagungen des Propheten Joel, 1873. S. 205—206.

3) See Gesen. — Kautzsch's Gram. 129, 2, b.

As I analyse the contents of the book, the first main section ends with Ch. 3. This section contains three minor sections: 1) Ch. 1—2, 16, a description of the devastation of the land by locusts and drought with references to "the day of Jehovah" and to fasting and repentance. 2) Ch. 2, 17—27, the appearance of the priests at prayer in the Temple and the outward blessings following. 3) Ch. 3, the outpouring of the Spirit accompanied by signs and the results of the same. Only the first minor section needs further analysis, as follows: a. Ch. 1, 4—12, the devastation of the land by locusts; b. vs. 13—20: a call to repentance and fasting in view of the coming day of Jehovah, vs. 13—15, before which the present drought is a warning, vs. 16—20; and c. Ch. 2, 1—16: in which is a highly figurative representation of the locusts, pressing their way unhindered through the city, such as is frequently known in the East, in which there seem to be hints of a ravaging army, 2, 2 b—9; then vs. 1—2 a and 10—16 give another proclamation of the day of Jehovah with signs in the heavens and on earth and a more urgent call to repentance and fasting. As already observed, vs. 10—11 point unmistakably to the time when the Spirit shall be poured out, and to the judgment of all nations, 3, 4; 4, 15. These verses describe, therefore, neither a storm (Credner), nor have we here signs accompanying a siege and the taking of the city by an army (Hengstenberg); nor need we assume an earthquake here, as some do. Wünsche (p. 178) rightly remarks, that the sudden change from the singular to the plural, v. 10, proves the appearance of a new moment here. The suffix of לְפָנָיו points back to יוֹם יְהוָה, v. 1. That the same suffix occurs repeatedly in the intermediate passages and in v. 11 (חילו) referring to the army of locusts, only shows how difficult it sometimes is to distinguish between parallel figures in metaphorical and symbolical language. Of course the

allegorists take advantage of such figurative language. But they ought first to show how such signs of nature with some probability should occur at the same time with the destruction of a city, and in which of the conquests of Judea like phenomena appeared. To meet the demands of the allegory completely they should have accompanied all four of the conquests of Judea according to the four names of locusts. Hengstenberg[1]) is reminded of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and cites Josephus[2]) as evidence. But were it certain that Josephus did not exaggerate the phenomena, which then occurred, the event would still be incompatible with Joel's account. For according to Jo. 4, 9—16a the people who shall assemble at Jerusalem shall be destroyed, and apparently in connection with the appearance of these signs, while the inhabitants of Zion shall be spared, 3, 5; 4, 17.

The second main section of the book is Ch. 4. Verses 1—3 announce the restoration of Israel, and vs. 9—16a the assembling of all nations to judgment and destructive retribution before Jehovah, who will also protect his own people — those who call upon him, 3, 5, — upon Zion 16b—17. Vs. 4—8 constitute a parenthesis, in which particular enemies are specified, because they have robbed the Temple and sold the children of Judah into slavery, to which, with vs. 18—21 the discussion will return.

The contents and connection of these different sections and minor sections admit only of very slight breaks as turning points in the earnest, enthusiastic discourse. But there is nowhere a real pause, and certainly none in 2, 16—20. We have here no puzzling problem proposed, which should require patient thought to solve it, but a short, lively rehearsal of the mournful circumstances as a sign and fearful fore-

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1) Christologie, I. 390 f.

2) De bell. Jud. 4, 4. §. 5; 6, 5, §. 3.

boding of a worse judgment; so that neither speaker nor audience could here pause, all the less because it had been announced, that "the great and terrible day of Jehovah" was near! The results of that dreadful ordeal must be announced immediately and follow as a logical necessity of the discourse, if only in the form of promises. And again, after the protection from enemies, the fruitfulness of the soil and the removal of the plague were promised, the spiritual blessing logically and almost necessarily follows, particularly, since this is an assembly of pious worshippers resting their hope upon the Prophet's promised blessings, of which the material ones above mentioned, can not be at once realized. Thus the first three chapters, whose contents have already been mentioned, constitute a single unbroken discourse, which seems at first sight complete in itself. But it is not complete, for we have already in 2. 2—9. 17—19 hints of the existing enemies, and of the announcement of the day of Jehovah, 1. 15; 2. 11, which are further noticed in Ch. 4. Neither can Ch. 4, which declares that these enemies shall be brought to judgment and announces restoration and security to Israel, be separated from the foregoing, to which it clearly makes reference. Hence Graetz aptly cites the parallel passages between this and the foregoing chapters to prove the unity of Joel. And because the enemies here mentioned remained hostile and threatening, 2. 17—19, the discourse could not fittingly close without the promise of the restoration of Israel's prosperity and security on the one hand and the punishment of the enemies of his people on the other.

But this interesting little book and prophecy has recently been considered a product of fancy and a confusion of ideas. When Graetz questions Joel's earnestness in regard to fasting and repentance, one is almost led to question the earnestness of Graetz. But when Merx, following Oort,

declares.[1]) that Joel has neither a clear meaning nor precision, one must at least consider how he arrives at such a conclusion. He finds neither the literal nor the allegorical interpretation possible, but Joel offers us an awkward, inconsistant combination of passages from his predecessors. He says: "Interpret and analyse as one will, there appears no clearness" (p. 16). Before entering properly upon the time of composition, it will be necessary thoroughly to test the views of Merx, as chiefly representing the conclusions of the newest school of critics, in order to establish Joel's originality and further to defend the unity of his prophecy. For this purpose the foregoing analysis will be useful.

Like the defenders of the allegorical interpretation, Merx can not conceive how "the day of Jehovah" in the first and second chapters can apply to any other time than that of the desolation of the land, i. e., to the future, as he understands it, without applying the whole book to the future, or else making it meaningless (pp. 7 f. 14 f.). Yet it has been shown that there is nothing unnatural or illogical in such an interpretation. On the contrary the references to the future in these two chapters prepare the way nicely for the further depicting of the scenes of that day, to which the enthusiastic discourse must soon lead. And why not? For painful as the present condition of things was, "the day of Jehovah" was, in the opinion of the Prophet, far more important. And he brings it into his description of the plague very skilfully, by regarding the latter as an omen of that day, which is near, and as destruction from the Almighty, 1, 15. The same is twice repeated in the further description, each time with fuller details in regard to its ominousness, 2, 1—2a. 10—11. And thus one sees that the declaration of "the day of Jehovah", as it appears in the fourth chapter,

1) Die Prophetie des Joel und ihre Ausleger, S. 14 ff.

was presupposed in the beginning of the prophecy as its chief purpose. And certain other expressions, repeated in connection with "the day of Jehovah", confirm this view, as: "Zion", "my holy Mountain", 2, 1, and "Zion", 2, 16; 3, 5, which shall remain an impregnable fortress of strength as the dwelling of Jehovah and His rescued people, 4, 16. 17. 21, after all the convulsions of heaven and earth, which shall take place on that day, 2, 10. 11; 3, 3—4; 4, 15—16. But this is not a generalization of the picture of desolation by the locusts so as to represent "the terrible day of Jehovah" (Hitzig, Wünsche); for they are very different things and are related to each other only as type and anti-type.

Merx takes exception also to the kinds of locusts, which Joel mentions in 1, 4. And I confess myself unable to explain גָּזָם, אַרְבֶּה, יֶלֶק and חָסִיל beyond doubt; nor have I seen a satisfactory explanation. Credner's[1]) attempt is somewhat incomplete as a whole and in detail. That the order of the names in 2, 25 is changed, appears suspicious, if one adopts his view that גָּזָם is the specific name and the other three are metamorphoses; to which Credner is obliged to marshal in גּוֹב from Nah. 3, 17 to describe the state before the first metamorphosis — why this one was omitted is not so clear, although גָּזָם takes its place in 1, 4 — of this single species of army locusts, which in itself appears to be too artificial. Credner thinks that because אַרְבֶּה is the general name for locusts in any state, it can therefore mean any *particular* state of locusts, e. g., the first metamorphosis. A strange sort of reasoning! His conclusions in respect to the other names, except יֶלֶק, are equally unsatisfactory. For only one of the four names is specifically used, and this one is not always so employed, viz., אַרְבֶּה, which is derived from רבה, and seems to have been applied to the

1) Der Prophet Joel übersetzt und erklärt, 1831. S. 295 ff.

locusts on account of the size or strength of the one or more species so named, or yet more probably on account of their multitude. And if אַרְבֶּה is sometimes a specific name — and neither of the others has the probability according to linguistic usage (as against Credner) — from which the other three might mark metamorphoses, such is not the case in this book. For in that case it should stand first in 1, 4, where the order is exact. That is, the species must precede the metamorphosis. The other names describe characteristics of these insects, which are too similar to one another to be clearly distinguished, where the context lends no further aid.[1]) Therefore, say the allegorists on the other hand, these names are used poetically for military trains and not scientifically. And in their favor is the fact, that probably formerly even as now, among several existing species, whose names are not everywhere the same, there is only one species of army locusts. But on the contrary the number of hostile armies, which in that case must all have come from the North (הַצְּפוֹנִי 2, 20), is not always reckoned as exactly four, nor the same ones by all this class of interpreters. Joel should certainly have been more exact, in as much as he mentions these names twice, if he would teach the reader concerning the future. "An allegory", says Delitzsch truly, "must, by significant hints, make itself unmistakably recognized as such. Where these are wanting, its assumption is arbitrary."[2])

Hitzig understands the names of the locusts as simply poetic, as also Keil, who rightly thinks: the characteristics indicated by these names can be clearly distinguished neither

1) The same is also true of the five other names of locusts: גָּזָם, חָגָב, חַרְגֹּל, סָלְעָם and צְלָצַל, which occur in the O. Testament.

2) Die Rudelb. u. Guer.'s Zeitschrift, 1851. S. 309.

lexicographically nor by consistent usage;[1]) and the meaning is only, "one army of locusts after another had entered the land and eaten up its fruits". Yet it would be peculiar, if the Hebrews had several different names for the same thing without intending any distinction between them (Wünsche). That the names indicate different metamorphoses (Credner), may therefore be correct: but the inexact differences of meaning between them and their generally poetical usage afford us insufficient support for such a hypothesis; which, aside from its incompleteness and incongruity, Credner's attempt itself best shows. But such support and confirmation are quite necessary, since there is nowhere else in the Old Testament so full a description of an army of locusts to confirm it, as the names also are nowhere else used with even so much precision as here. All this indicates that the names are not scientifically employed by Joel, but not that they were not common names among the Hebrews. For truly we may not conclude, that the Prophet stooped to teach us Natural History (Hengstenberg): but rather, therefore, may we expect of him, as of every one not scientifically informed, the usual names of the land, be they those of a species or of the metamorphoses of a species. Finally, in favor of the single species of army locusts and the single army witnesses the passage, 2, 20, where הַצְּפוֹנִי can only be a collective name, because the following suffixes are all in the singular, as also חֵילִי, 2, 11: חֵילוֹ, 2, 25; גּוֹי, 1, 6; עַם, 2, 2, are only collective terms for the single army.

That Joel's description of the desolation of the land and the extreme want of man and beast brought about by the locusts and drought is true to the reality of such plagues,

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1) Instructive in this connection is the passage Deut. 28, 38, where the verb חסל denotes the action of the locust called אַרְבֶּה.

is confirmed by various oriental travellers and by residents in Palestine, who have witnessed them.[1]) Sufficient for the present purpose will be a few sentences from a description[2]) of the plague of locusts in the Summer of 1865, which indicates the utter desolation of the land after these avaricious insects had entered it. They devoured every trace of vegetation in a few days, so that the country bore the aspect of Winter and the orange-trees and vineyards were, in the opinion of those who had previously witnessed such plagues, rendered unfruitful for six or seven years to come. They pressed straight forward like marching soldiers and found their way into the houses through every opening, so that the inhabitants could do nothing but attempt to ward off the hopping, flying multitudes of insects. They perished finally in the Sea of Tiberias and in the Jordan, so that in the month of August the shores of the Dead Sea were lined with them three or four feet thick, which the waves had thrown out. "Read," says the writer, "the first and second chapters of Joel and you have a complete description of this frightful spectacle. . . . . We can comprehend the despair of the Egyptians in the time of Moses". Then the drought is mentioned, which is a natural consequence of the destruction of the vegetation, and the attending plague among the herds,[3]) and how the people suffered for want of food and water, although they received aid from other lands. In a later letter[4]) the same writer gives an interesting account of the three metamorphoses, which this

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1) Comp. Robinson, Bibl. Res. in Palestine, as also the works of Niebuhr, Shaw and others.

2) By the daughter of the late Bishop Gobat of Jerusalem, written from Nazareth in "Die Neue Evangel. Kirchenzeitung", Jan. 27, 1866.

3) One is reminded of Joel 1, 17—20.

4) In the same number of "Die Neue Evang. Kirchenz."

single species of army locusts underwent in a short time. This supports the view that Jo. 1, 4 mentions only one species, but militates effectually against Credner's argument, that the metamorphoses continued into the second year, as he explains הַשְּׁנִים, 2, 25. This plural, not dual, form can be better explained with Hitzig, who applies it to the years of want, which followed the plague. Or Joel may refer to the last of several successive yearly plagues.

I also cite a few sentences, in part verbally, from a letter recently received from J. L. Schneller in Jerusalem, who has resided in, and frequently journeyed in all directions through, Palestine for some thirty years. Out of "twenty-four" kinds[1]) of locusts, with which he is acquainted, there is only one species of army locusts, which "comes from the North-east or East in the end of April, but mostly in May, or yet in June", — one is naturally reminded here of הַצְּפוֹנִי, Jo. 2, 20, which gives the exegetes so much trouble, while many deny that the locusts ever come from the North-east or East into Palestine. The army of locusts is "often several hours long and wide and several hundred feet deep. These billions of insects darken the sky", while they produce a rumbling noise by rubbing their wings with their hindmost legs. "The people think the day of judgment must be at hand. All kinds of vegetation even to the tenderer bark on the trees and the roots is soon eaten up. Trade of all kinds ceases. Whole families leave their houses and homes in despair." Further: "If there is an east-wind, the locusts are driven by this into the Mediterranean Sea, where they receive the reward of the evil they have done. If the wind turns in the opposite direction, they are then

1) Of course "kinds" here can scarcely mean *species* scientifically understood. Yet I saw twelve or thirteen kinds in Herr Schneller's collection in Jerusalem last Spring, the most of which are certainly real species and among them the army locust.

driven towards the East. But they lay under the stones millions of eggs, from which the young ones eat the tender grass which, in the meantime, has sprung up. The plague always lasts three or four years."

If we suppose that three or four such years had elapsed during the plague with first the sudden alarm and then the continued misery, which it brought to the people, we have the mournful event,[1]) from which the highly figurative portraiture by an enthusiastic prophet like Joel could have originated, and especially if we consider, that his military figures may have been suggested by the yet fresh remembrance of a destructive invasion by an enraged and plundering army of men.[2])

It is well known that the army locusts frequently lay their eggs in Autumn a few inches underneath the soil and after the brooding in the Spring the young feed upon the tender roots and kernels. It is therefore quite possible, that they remained in the country several years, if the winters were mild enough, as הַשְּׁנִים, 2, 25, and the unusual destructiveness of this plague in particular, 1, 2. 3 ff., seem to require. Such an army of locusts coming out of Samaria might fitly

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1) In regard to plagues from the army locusts (Acridium migratorium) in Europe as also in Africa last century, some features of which forcibly remind one of Joel's description, compare Oken's Allgemeine Naturgeschichte, V. 3. Abtheilung S. 1514 ff.

2) My interpretation does not necessitate the assumption, that an enemy is thought of anywhere in the former half of the book, but since Ch. 4, as we shall yet more fully see, has much to say about enemies, who had pillaged the land and plundered the city, and since we have a significant hint of them in 2, 17—19, this assumption is certainly admissible and apparently intended. Merx says therefore quite correctly (p. 66): "Our description, 2, 2—10, follows the sharp line between metaphor and real description of the locusts, but finally passes over into metaphor."

be called, "the Northerner"[1]), and its different broods, or the different branches of the one onward marching insect-army spread out over the mountains and valleys, may easily have been driven by different winds — or, as is sometimes the case, have proceeded of themselves — some into the Dead Sea, some into the Mediterranean and some into the desert to the South, and thus have perished. Jo. 2, 20. Yet it seems to me most propable, that this army originated in the Syrian or Palmyrenian Desert, say south of Damascus, and was driven by the wind south-westward over the mountains into Judea and, after it had devastated the land one or more years, perished as described above. This subject of the locusts has been specially dwelt upon in order to remove every inducement to interpret the first half of the book prophetically, allegorically, or typically as Merx attempts, by showing that, with few exceptions, it gives a clear sense in the true meaning of the words, making due allowance of course for figurative expressions.

II.

Thus it has seemed necessary by a detailed statement of the contents and connection of the parts of our book to prepare the way before entering the contest with Merx, Oort and Duhm, particularly the first, in defence of Joel's unity and originality; and this defines the scope of the present chapter.

As we have seen, Merx rejects both the literal and the allegorical interpretation and proposes his own apocalyptical, as a third and only possible, interpretation, without observing that every prophecy of the last judgment is, at least, partly

1) Other explanations of הַצְּפוֹנִי and changes in its form by Hitzig, Ewald, Meier and others are mere conjectures, which need not detain us here.

apocalyptic and may contain types, or even an allegory. Both Merx and the allegorical interpreters understand Joel to be a typical prophecy; and neither party accepts a historical basis for the first two chapters. But Merx has one advantage — an advantage in respect to his interpretation, if, indeed, not to science — over the allegorists, namely, that they feel obliged to find a suitable fulfilment of their prophetic allegory in the history, while they hesitate and disagree as to the exact application, and each accepts what seems to him most propable; whereas Merx, in that he presupposes Joel's complete want of clearness and originality on the one hand and on the other adopts the apocalyptical interpretation, is relieved of all obligations to explain the book clearly. Thus he severs it almost entirely from historical events, which are prominent features of the book, and undertakes to account for its origin on other grounds.

According to Merx, Joel is not a Prophet at all but a Midrash-composer of the fifth century, B. C. He was a man learned in the Scriptures, who had studied his predecessors, especially the Prophets carefully. Ezra and Nehemiah had rebuilt the Temple, and reorganized the priesthood and a more complete Temple-service than existed before the Exile, which cultus was obliged to give ample room to the powerful and united Levitism of that time. Since the city wall, which was completed after the year 445, is mentioned by Joel, he must have written after that date, (pp. 31—33)[1]). The people, like Joel himself, had, in this Persian period, begun to despair both of the re-establishment of the kingdom and of the judgment of God upon the enemies of Israel, which the Prophets had so often foretold (pp. 35. 42). In that discouraging age they were obliged to give up all hope, or else trust to the fulfilment of these

1) Merx, Die Prophetie des Joel und ihre Ausleger.

prophecies in the distant future. Under the circumstances Joel made the attempt to comfort his despondent people with the correct interpretation of the Prophets. He sought in history a type for his eschatological views and found it in the emancipation from the Egyptian yoke (p. 44.), while he chose passages from Isaiah, Ezekiel and other Prophets wherewith to proclaim "the day of Jehovah", the last judgment, and the deliverance (not of believers, but) of the Judeans only. Merx sets forth at length this typological hypothesis apologetically — for he is conscious of his „retrogression into the unscientific typology" — and then adds (p. 45): "The question to be answesed is no other than this, whether or not, in that time, a typology, like the one described is conceivable and probable. To this I answer decidedly, Yes; and on the other hand, with the further question, Where then should one expect to find the beginning of the Midrash and the Haggada, if not in this period?"

Our next exercise will be to examine the grounds upon which this singular hypothesis is based, and then the passages from which Joel is supposed to have drawn so largely for his Midrash. But the question just when the Midrash and the Haggada had their beginning, can not interest us much, since we shall have occasion to see, that they are methods unknown to Joel. And this indifferent question should not turn us aside from the at present more important one concerning Joel's typology. The deliverance from Egypt is found, it is true, throughout the Old Testament as the type of that which Jehovah can and will do for His convenant-people. And some passages referring to it can rightly be regarded as typical. But it is not meant thereby, that a simple reference to the Exodus and to events connected with it suffice for a typical interpretation. Without a type and an anti-type together

with a comparison, either mentioned or easily to be recognized, between the two, a passage should never be typically interpreted; i. e., there must be an unmistakable outward similarity between the supposed type and anti-type. Instances of such a typology occur frequently in the Old Testament, and to every reader of the same there is hardly another event so well known as the deliverance out of Egyptian bondage, which serves almost every author as a token of Jehovah's good will towards His chosen people. Aside from the age of the Pentateuch which contains the record of it, it is undeniable that the principal details of that emancipation remained in the constant remembrance of the Israelites. This event could serve as the type of every deliverance from oppression and even so of moral deliverance down to the time of the Apostles. Acts 7, 34 ff.; 13, 17 ff., a figure, with which every one was familiar and of which the Prophets were particularly fond.

If then Joel had chosen this figure, or even had had this historical event in mind, it would be hardly credible to suppose, that he would have hesitated on such a favorable occasion to mention the impressive and instructive type, as other authors under like circumstances invariably did. But Merx (pp. 44—47) is certain that Joel chose Ez. 20, 5—33 ff.; Pss. 78 and 105; Num. 14, 32, passages which relate to the deliverance out of Egypt together with the destruction of the disobedient, as models of his Midrash, just as Daniel borrowed אֶרֶץ הַצְּבִי, 11, 16. 41: 8. 9, from Ez. 20, 6. 15. It deserves here to be emphasized again, that the mere citation of similar passages from two authors is no proof of the priority of either of them. This kind of argument, as also the *argumentum e silentio*, was once much employed to prove the early age of Joel. Merx observes their weakness, but makes frequent use of the former, supposing the "inverted spear" to be quite as useful. The

cited authors may be quite independent of each other, or both may have drawn from the same source, whether it be written or oral tradition. The argument under consideration is valid, only when it is certain that an author quotes another, who is recognized to be older, and applies the same expression similarly. Of the passages, which Merx names, only one can beyond a doubt be called a Midrash ("eine Studie, מִדְרָשׁ") after an earlier author, viz. Dan. 9, where the author himself informs us of his purpose and at once begins to comment upon Jer. 29, 10—14. Pss. 78 and 105, it is true, relate to the earliest history of the covenant-people, yet not in order to teach the people, but rather forcibly to remind them, especially of the deliverance from bondage. For the same purpose Ezekiel goes through the history, 20, 5 ff. But Joel offers us nothing of that kind.

Now, whether Joel had the plague of locusts, Ex. 10, (Hengstenberg, Merx et al.) specially in view or not, concerns me little; but it is certain that he did not model his prophecy after that account.[1]) That plague was sent from God both as a terror and a punishment to force the Egyptians to set the Israelites free; but the apparently accidental calamity, which Joel describes, causes such terror and misery, that it is regarded as a chastisement. The two plagues were also quite as unlike in their results as in their purpose. The Egyptian plague did not effect the deliverance, while the one recorded by Joel led to the desired fasting and repentance. But how is it with Merx's further comparisons? Does the darkening of the sky in our book represent the plague of darkness? Ex. 20, 21—23. The latter seems to have done the Egyptians no special injury, nor did it secure the liberation of the Israelites. The former was only one of the

1) Merx thinks there was time enough for Joel after the later origin of the Pentateuch according to the hypothesis of Graf.

signs that should accompany the announced judgment of the world, whose object was not the deliverance of those who called upon Jehovah, Jo. 3, 5, — their deliverance is already effected, and they only need protection here, 4, 16b. 17, — but the object is to judge and to punish the enemies of God and His people. Finally, the parallel between the slaying of the first-born in Egypt and the destructive judgment proclaimed by Joel is equally unhappy. For the former caused the liberation of the Israelites, whereas the latter only destroyed, and liberated no one, as Merx himself observes (pp. 46. 47). Granted that our author on account of his "non-originality" must have taken "the basis of his representation" from Ex. 10, where did he get the material for the magnificent structure? and who put it all so nicely together, that the discourse should be quite rhetorical?[1]) The Prophet seems rather to have borrowed from Ex. 10 only that which was familiar to every Israelite. And our "Midrash" must have had other sources for the description of the plague of locusts, since the one discovered by the critics is wholly insufficient.

But what shall we say of the latter half of our book? Merx follows the order of presentation through step by step from 2, 18 to the end and adds (pp. 20 f.): "I am entirely unable to discover full consistency and clearness in this gradation, much less grandeur and animated contemplation,

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1) Merx finds fault, wherever the description ascends above outward, material things. He says ironically (pp. 9 f.): "One should remember the army of locusts have been present, and all have seen it. Why does he describe its approach in many words, unless the pleasure he takes in the words themselves urges him to it?" — as if the earnest eloquent speaker of every time might not stir up the indifferent people from their lethargy to regret, resolution and action by illustrations from their deeper experiences. Of an "approach" of another army of locusts there is not a trace in the book.

or deep religious penetration into the design of God with His people. Every thing here is external; it is circumstantially painted and in its conception fleshly; it is particulary Jewish, the meditating of a man of narrow views, who is yet much entangled in the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (1, 13.)". He further adds: "So cuttung a judgment must be verified". Certainly! For Joel has generally been regarded not only as one of the most spiritually-minded prophets, but a writer of the deepest thoughts and sublimest ideas. And how does Merx verify his much ventured judgment? Simply by going through the Prophets, particularly the Messianic and eschatological portions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, to discover where Joel, whose "book is only the result of studying the writings", gathered his materials; and strange to say, Merx finds, that Joel very seldom agrees with his predecessors, upon whom he was constantly dependent. And what hear we next! "Joel found before him these separate elements, which he awkwardly put together. He borrowed them and gave them an order, but it is exactly the opposite of prophetic originality" (p. 22). It is noteworthy, but not very suprising, that we soon hear the sarcastic rejoinder likewise from the new school: "If poor Joel put forth an unintelligible and illogical book, in which nothing is in its right place, this does not prove that he is a younger writer (the style is dependent upon the age), but only that the critic would have done it better."[1])

It becomes us, as we proceed, to weigh carefully the arguments of such a prominent orientalist, when they concern not only a difference of centuries in the age of the book, but also the originality and significance of the Prophet in general. Merx says (pp. 22. 23):" Just as he (Joel) has the holiness

1) Reuss, Geschichte der heiligen Schriften des Alten Testaments, 1881.

and security of the city of Jerusalem from Isaiah, so the pouring out of the Spirit is from Ez. 39, 29, the phenomena in the heavens from Ez. 32, 7; Is. 60, 19; 24, 23 and the assembling of all nations to judgment from Is. 34, 1". In his comments upon these and other passages, which the Prophet is supposed to have used, it is remarkable how often, after comparing them with our book, Merx himself finds not only the phraseology much changed, but quite a different application made by Joel. And this is more particularly the case in the comparison with passages of supposed later origin from the Books of Isaiah and Zechariah. This certainly does not strongly support the later origin of Joel. Of course this is because "he put it awkwardly together". And yet the Prophet from beginning to end has only one purpose in view, namely, to comfort his people in the time of need, as Merx also observes, and in contrast therewith to proclaim destructive judgment upon all enemies of the theocracy. But in Joel's opinion this comfort was to be reached only through repentance, which should be followed by outward blessings, as protection from their enemies and fruitfulness of the soil, and afterwards, אַחֲרֵי־כֵן, the outpouring of the Spirit, Ch. 3. The Spirit shall come "upon all flesh" to inspire men of every class and to save those who call upon Jehovah, 3. 1. 2. 5; but there is no indication here of a distinction between Judeans as "of course saved" and all others as "of course damned" (Merx).[1] At the same time the signs in the heavens, 3, 3—4, point forward to the judgment of the world, 4, 9 ff.; and then the discourse passes over into Ch. 4, which, as a new main section of the book, has the same general object steadily in view, but

1) On the contrary I remark that Joel seems to condemn for destruction only those nations, who by contact with Israel could have known Jehovah. Neither the Jonians nor the Shabaeans are expressly condemned. Comp. Jo. 4,6. 8.

proceeds from another standpoint, namely, a political and an eschatological one.

The answer to the question: What shall become of the enemies of Israel? is given first in Ch. 4. It begins: At that time I will restore the prosperity of Judah and Jerusalem, v. 1; but in contrast therewith shall all nations be gathered into the valley of decision before Jehovah enthroned upon Zion to be judged, and to receive their fearful retribution in the valley of threshing, עֵמֶק הַחָרוּץ; for the day of "Jehovah is near in the valley of decision," 4, 2. 12—14. The signs in the heavens and upon earth are at once repeated, vs. 15. 16 a. Thus the day of Jehovah, the judgment of all people, and these signs were connected in Joel's mind from the beginning of the discourse. Comp. 1, 15; 2, 1. 10. 11; 3, 3. 4. It is simply natural, indeed necessary, that the discourse, after this last picture of the judgment, should make another turn here, in order to reach a satisfactory and logical conclusion. For, if it was the purpose of the prophecy to proclaim the day of Jehovah as the judgment of the world, yet the chief purpose was to inspire hope in the faithful Israelites. Hence the promise is repeated from 3, 5, that the covenant-people, בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל, shall remain secure in spite of all these convulsions of heaven and earth and "ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God", because Jehovah in Zion is the refuge and fortress of His people. Vs. 16 b. 17. Comp. pp. 17.

But while Ch. 4, 2. proclaims the assembling of all nations to judgment, who had scattered the inheritance of Jehovah among the heathen, divided His land and sold the youth into slavery to satisfy their lusts, the names of the evil-doers are not mentioned, as if it would have been too painful, but chiefly, as we shall directly see, on account of the necessary universality of the subject here. Vs. 4—8 are a paranthesis brought into the discourse in order to

specify certain, but not the principal, enemies, who, as it seems, had been unfaithful friends, and had taken part in the above-named deeds for the sake of gain: — Amos seems to accuse the Tyrians of the same unfaithfulness in a sort of historical compendium, 1, 9. 10. At any rate the subject seems to arise in the Prophet's mind suddenly, and he almost passionately says: וְגַם מָה־אַתֶּם לִי וגו׳, "Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Zidon and all the districts of Philistia", wherein וגם evidently points out a new category of enemies, yet, as we shall soon see, they are contained in the former. And although Hengstenberg[1]) carries the allegory in its universality over into the announcement of the judgment, Ch. 4, he was nevertheless obliged to admit, that these are enemies in the literal sense, if, indeed, named "merely as examples". He also admitted that this passage, 4, 4—8, is "parenthetical". But are these enemies specified merely as examples? On the contrary the Phenicians and Philistians are addressed directly in the second person, particular malicious deeds are imputed to them and their specific punishments are announced for the near future. The universality, therefore, applies only to the judgment of the world and to the outpouring of the Spirit. These enemies had carried away the costly articles of the Temple into *their* temples and were the slave-traders, who had sold the youth to the Jonians, vs. 5. 6.

But if one object particulary to this interpretation of 4, 4—8 as a parenthesis for the specification of the enemies therein mentioned and their deeds, one must then explain, on the one hand, why exactly these enemies, as וגם, v. 4, their names and the phraseology generally show, are so personally and conspicuously addressed, and on the other hand, why no names appear in vs. 2. 3, since the division

1) Christologie des Alten Testaments, I. 332.

of the land and the casting of lots for the people were quite as great injuries as the plundering of the Temple. My answer to the latter question is, that the universalizing of these deeds and events for the general judgment renders specifications inappropriate. But if any one will, on that account, undertake to separate the events in vs. 2. 3 from those in vs. 4 ff. altogether, as has hitherto been the custom. again I reply, that the discourse here is not broken, and that the generalizing expressions in v. 3b. and the specializing ones in vs. 6. 7a, although in part different as to persons, render the conclusion unavoidable, that only one instance of slave-dealing is recorded in the two passages. But so important and indispensable as this parenthesis was. it could be inserted only here, after the events which suggested it, and before the apostrophizing summons went forth to the surrounding hostile nations to meet Jehovah and "the mighty ones" for battle in the valley of decision, where He will judge them, vs. 9 ff. After such a generalization specializing would be inappropriate both logically and in the order of time.

But it is the frequent repetition in this rapid and highly figurative discourse, which enables one to grasp the whole in its unity and its comparatively harmonious connection. Thus עֲמֹק יְהוֹשָׁפָט, 4, 2 and 12, in connection with עֲמֶק הֶחָרוּץ. vs. 13. 14, should make it unmistakable, that the general subject in these passages is the same, although גַּם. vs. 4, and the change to imperative speech, vs. 9 ff., clearly point out an intervening parenthesis. Other parallel passages linking together the whole discourse have already been noticed. Here in 4, 2. 3 is given the historical ground, namely, their hostility to Jehovah und His covenant-people. why the nations should enter into judgment with Him, and upon this basis the earnest discourse ascends — after the necessary interuption, vs. 4—8. — to the eschatological rep-

resentation, vs. 9—16a, where the climax of the entire book is reached in v. 17.

It is also the question of the order in this eschatological part, that disturbs the peace of the new school of critics. Merx's apocalyptical typology leads him further into error here than usual, and he asks quite unanswerable, and from his point of view quite irrelavent, questions. For the apocalypse does not enable us to determine the time and order of future events. Only a few chief events are given as turning points. But according to reason, theology and the analogy of the *jus civile*, the teaching or law goes before, then the protection of the obedient, then the correction and restoration of the corrigible, and finally must follow the condemnation of the incorrigible and criminal. But this is not a necessary program by which to judge of the appropriateness of every eschatological prophecy. Yet I believe such prophecies will be found usually to follow this order. If then we can discover about so much of the order of the chief events, which happen to be given in an eschatological prophecy, we should count ourselves happy. And so much seems to be clear in Joel, and indeed these chief elements are here more fully presented than usual.[1]) Further, we are not only unable to discover a chronological order according to which the events of an apocalyptical or an eschatological prophecy should occur, but we are often unable to find complete consistency in such a prophecy itself, e. g., some parts of Ezekiel or of the Book of the Revelation. Each prophet who looks out over the Messianic, or eschato-

1) It is because Oort (Theologisch Tijdschrift, X. 375) does not enter into Joel's profound thoughts, that he finds instead of order and unity "an artificially prepared prophecy". Because he can not conceive how the author can repeat himself, or insert a paranthesis like 4, 4—8, he discovers a double judgment in Ch. 4.

logical period, seems to start from his own prophetic point of view and prophesies only a few particular events, whose order and time are indicated by means of "before this and that", or "after so and so," or perhaps they are left entirely indefinite. Blessings, warnings, judgments and retributions upon particular people, and the judgment of the world with signs upon earth and in the heavens are so woven together in the same narration that frequently we can only guess, what is intended as an occurrence of the near future, what of distant time, or what is eschatological. A conspicuous example of the indefiniteness of eschatological prophecy in respect to time is in the discourse of Jesus, Matt. 24, 14 ff. The parallel passage, Luke 21, 20, shows that the destruction of Jerusalem is here intended. It is equally clear that the discourse is in part eschatological. Now, let the skilful interpreter mark the elements of time in Matt. 24, 14—31 and tell us, if he can, when the events announced shall occur, or how long the epochs are, which are limited by "immediately after" (v. 29), or by "then" (v. 30). Yet, as with Joel "the day of Jehovah is near", so here v. 33: "When ye see all these things, know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors." If the destruction of Jerusalem were not a historical fact, who would venture to point out its place in the order of the events announced in this discourse? And since the subject returns to the destruction of Jerusalem, shall we conclude that the destruction is to be repeated just as Oort discovers two judgments of the world in Joel's prophecy?

As I have indicated, Joel follows the rational order of moral and civil government. But Merx objects and thinks, the fact that "the darkening of the sun and the turning of the moon into blood, as also the proclamation of Jerusalem's immunity" "are announced beforehand", shows "how little reality there is in the pouring out of the Spirit

with him (Joel)." Without these there would be "a sort of a climax" (p. 22). But how could the climax be more natural than to let the sending of the Spirit follow the protection from enemies, the removal of the plague and the return of fruitfulness? And if my conclusion is correct that Ch. 4 continues the same general subject, only from a different point of view, namely, a political and an eschatological one, and brings it to a close in v. 17, then a greater climax in Ch. 3 would be wholly inappropriate. Although the contents of the two chapters differ so widely in some respects, yet a close connection is maintained between them, in that the same end is ever kept in view. This is why the expression כִּי הִנֵּה, "for behold", 4, 1, fits so well here as another link in the chain, which binds the parts into one united whole. But as to whether the signs and wonders, announced in connection with the day of Jehovah and immediately following the outpouring of the Spirit, which seem so disturbing to Merx, are *really appropriate* here, I modestly confess my ignorance. They are things which belong to the category of the supernatural in whose realm we have no prerogative. But neither Joel nor Peter, Acts 2, 17—24, supposed there was an incongruity therein.

Yet if Joel leaves the future indefinite as to exact points of time, he at least distinguishes between periods. According to my analysis and interpretation of the scope and purpose of his book בַּיָּמִים הָהֵמָּה וּבָעֵת הַהִיא, 3, 2; 4, 1. 18, (the expression in the three places is essentially the same) could properly be said first after אַחֲרֵי־כֵן, 3, 1. The latter expression assumes an indefinite point of time in the future and points at once backward to an event or events, which shall then have taken place and forward to that which shall yet occur. In 3, 1 it points back to the fulfilment of the prophecy in 2, 18—25, or to the Prophet's immediate future. It is nearly related to בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים,

but is not of exactly the same meaning.[1]) And it may, perhaps, be regarded as the beginning of "the day of Jehovah" in the widest sense of the term, beginning with the Messianic period which is characterized by the outpouring of the Spirit, and ending with the judgment of the world. בַּיָּמִים הָהֵמָּה וּבָעֵת הַהִיא, 4, 1, falls, therefore, within this indefinite period, יוֹם יהיה, and is itself temporally indefinite. Thus the elements of time in our book are all necessarily indefinite as to length, or rather not to be determined. From this conclusion it follows, that אָשִׁיב אֶת־שְׁבִית can apply to Joel's near future, only in case the period of the pouring out of the Spirit and the rescue of those who call upon Jehovah also soon take place, the promises in 2, 18—25 having, of course, first been fulfilled. But we have just seen, that the events in Ch. 3 fall wholly in the indefinite future. The fact that Ch. 4, 2 refers to the assembling of the nations to the last judgment shows also, that v. 1, as does the expression בימים ההמה ובעת ההיא elsewhere, refers to the distant future. Thus אשוב את־שבית may and should be taken in connection with the promise in 3, 5, which affords us another proof of the near connection between Chs. 3 and 4.

On the other hand the parenthesis, Ch. 4, 4—8, applies to the near future. It begins with the direct personal address, continues the same throughout and promises the bringing back of the youth sold as slaves to the Jonians, i. e., what must yet occur in their life-time. It is indeed possible, that אשוב את־שבות may indirectly refer to the bringing back (v. 7), since Joel's language often bears a double meaning, but this can be only of the smallest moment

1) The phrase is similarly explained by Credner (Der Prophet Joel, 1831. S. 222), who thinks, however, that the outpouring of the Spirit did not occur on account of the transgression of the divine commands.

in the above-mentioned *restitutio in integrum* of Israel. The return from the Babylonian captivity, (Hengstenberg, Hävernick, Schrader et al.), as we shall further see, should scarcely come into consideration here, since Joel nowhere mentions nor presupposes that captivity.

Finally, the paragraph, 4, 18—21, has thus far remained unnoticed, because it deserves attention apart. Merx raises (pp. 24 ff.) special objections here to the previous interpretations. And this is not surprising; for they seem to me to be founded upon a misunderstanding of the relation between this paragraph and the rest of the book. For example, v. 19, which announces definite punishments for a specified injury to Israel by particular enemies, would stand exactly between the promises of the choicest blessings (vs. 18 and 20) very awkwardly, if this paragraph, as it is usually understood, distinctly promised yet other general blessings of the Messianic time, or were a continuation of the foregoing verses (16b—17), which again both logically and consistently declare Jehovah's defence and protection of His convenant-people during the fearful scenes attending the judgment at the end of that period of blessing, just as similar promises are added in 3, 5 immediately after the preceding announcement of like phenomena. But all will appear quite otherwise, if we observe, that the book and prophecy virtually close with 4, 17, the security of Zion, as the sacred dwelling-place of Jehovah, and that vs. 18—21 are a short résumé of the whole discourse, or more particularly of the promises therein. This résumé, it is true, is neither formal nor quite complete; but it is clear and meets the objections, which have reasonably been opposed to other explanations. It would be difficult to show a *real* advance in the discourse after 4, 17, but at most a poetical peroration summing up the foregoing prophecies.

That וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא (v. 18), which stretches out over

the entire Messianic and eschatological periods, recurs here in nearly the same form and with exactly the same meaning as in 3, 2 and 4, 1 and clearly indicates a turn in the narration of events. It would have been superfluous to recall the desolation of the land by locusts and drought, which still remained a sad picture of despair before all eyes. Yet it is not left unnoticed. Certain words and phrases refer to them, by way of contrast, very pointedly. Thus עָסִיס, the flowing new wine, reminds us of the long failing vintage, 1, 5 ff., as כָּל־אֲפִיקֵי יְהוּדָה and חָלָב of the parching drought, the exhausted springs and the misery of the panting herds; while they all together (v. 18a) sum up the promise of the soil's returning fruitfulness and plenty in the land, 2, 21—26. For the promises of fruitfulness rise to the poetical and figurative already in 2, 24b and this happy state of things is to be endless, 2, 26. 27. Ch. 4, 18 expands the same into Messianic figures similar to those of Amos (9, 13) and other Prophets. Then v. 18b points us to the fountain in the House of Jehovah, to Israel the symbolical origin of all divine gifts, both outward and *especially* spiritual. The words וְהַשִּׁקָּה אֶת־נַחַל הַשִּׁטִּים speak of this fountain in poetical and hyperbolical fulness, which shall overflow the Dead Sea and the Jordan and richly supply the dry valley of Shittim: and thus this symbol fittingly recalls the pouring out of the Spirit in fulness in Ch. 3. V. 19 refers to 4, 2, 3, the announcement that Jehovah will enter into the general judgment with all hostile nations, where the universality of the subject rendered particularities inappropriate, and informs us who the chief of those enemies and robbers of His inheritance, land and sanctuary were, viz., the Egyptians and Edomites (Karle[1]). Vs. 20, 21 promise the security of the

1) Commentationes criticae ad Vetus Testamentum pertinentes, 1867, p. 31 sq.

land and the city, so long as Jehovah dwells upon Zion (Comp. v. 17; 2, 27); while the certain revenge of the shedding of the "innocent blood" — in view of the cruelty of the enemies, vs. 3. 4—8. 19, — is promised with the emphasis of a moral necessity, vs. 2. 3. 9—14. Indeed, it may be said, that these last two verses contain the theme of the whole prophecy.

By means of this necessarily lengthy analysis of the contents of our book and the relation of its parts, I trust I have been able to show, that the charge of incongruity and of want of clearness and order is almost groundless — the supposed lack of originality and of biassed priestly character will be considered next. Joel has at least a definite plan, order, and not confusion. If his book is a compilation from other authors, it is nevertheless not without " harmonious arrangement in the order of events." That he not only agrees so little with his alleged sources — of which more in the next chapter, — but often sharply conflicts with them (Merx, 21—23), renders this hypothesis of the book's origin very suspicious. That he has produced so small a work of so different materials and attained so much harmony and consistency, certainly favours originality. But because a consistent system seems to result from the foregoing analysis, it is not assumed, that the interpretation proper, which lies beyond the limits of our subject, will offer no further difficulties. Yet it is believed that light has been thrown upon a number of very difficult passages.

VITA.

I, William Lazarus Pearson, was born on the fourth day of July, 1849, at Coonsboro, Johnston County, North Carolina, U. S. of America, a village upon the plantation of my father, Lazarus Pearson, who was a farmer. In 1854 the family-residence was changed to another plantation near Goldsboro in the same State, where my youth was spent alternately upon the farm and in the very irregular public schools until my twenty-first year, excepting the year 1867—68, during which I enjoyed the tuition of the Academy at New Garden, North Carolina. In the year 1870—71 at the College at Hartsville in the State of Indiana, a more systematic course of study was begun in preparation for college proper, and from 1871 to 1875 I pursued the regular Classical Course of academic studies in Earlham College at Richmond, Indiana, of which institution, after the requisite examinations, I became an alumnus with the Degree of Artium Baccalaureus in the year last named. One year thereafter I was Principal of the Academy at Fairmount, Indiana, one year Principal of Southland College at Helena in the State of Arkansas, and one year illness in our family required my presence at home, Goldsboro, North Carolina. The three years immediately following I attended the Theological Seminary at Princeton in the State of New Jersey and heard the lectures of Professors McGill, Green, Moffat,

C. W. Hodge, Aiken and A. A. Hodge and Dr. McCurdy. Meanwhile, after attendance upon post-graduate courses of lectures by President McCosh and Professors Murray and Hunt in the College of New Jersey (also in Princeton) and special examinations, the Degree of Artium Magister was confered upon me in 1880 by the Trustees of that College. In 1881, having completed the full course of studies with the regular examinations, I graduated from the above-named Theological Seminary, being at the same time awarded the Hebrew Fellowship of that institution upon special examination and the presentation of the requisite dissertation. In October of the same year I became a matriculated student of the University of Berlin, where during four semesters I attended the lectures of Professors Dillmann, Weiss, Schrader, Sachau, Zeller, Dieterici and Strack and of Drs. Brugsch and Jahn. In the Autumn of 1883 I came to Leipzig in order to devote myself more exclusively to oriental studies. During three semesters, excepting an absence of three months upon a tour in the East, I have enjoyed and profitted by the instruction of Professors Fleischer and Krehl, and Drs. König and Guthe. To these two Professors, as also to Professor Delitzsch of the Theological Faculty, I feel myself under special obligations for the kind advice, which they have often given me.